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EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL BOARD ROLE AS RELATED TO LEVEL OF LOCAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND ALLOCATION OF EXPENDITURES.

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TWO HYPOTHESES WERE TESTED--(1) NO SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP EXISTS BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD ROLE AND THE LEVEL OF LOCAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT, AND (2) NO SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP EXISTS BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF EXPECTATIONS FOR SELECTED EXPENDITURES AND THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR THESE EXPENDITURES. EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL BOARD ROLE WERE MEASURED BY AN INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT IN 12 WISCONSIN SCHOOL DISTRICTS. SUBJECTS OF THE STUDY WERE 150 CITIZENS, 20 TEACHERS, AND ALL SCHOOL AND MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS. THE FIRST HYPOTHESIS WAS SUBJECTED TO 16 SEPARATE TESTS, AND ONLY ONE PROVED SIGNIFICANT. THE SECOND, SUBJECTED TO 36 TESTS, RESULTED IN NINE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS (NOT ENOUGH TO REJECT THE HYPOTHESIS). IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE STUDY INCLUDED--(1) HOLDING PREFERENCES FOR PARTICULAR SCHOOL PROGRAMS MAY NOT BE THE SAME AS BEING WILLING TO PAY FOR THEM, (2) THERE MAY BE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RESPONDING FAVORABLY TOWARD FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS IN AN INTERVIEW AND ACTUAL FINANCIAL COMMITMENT, (3) EXPECTATIONS FOR EXPENDITURES MAY NOT EXIST AS A SINGLE IDENTIFIABLE CONCEPT, AND (4) THE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS WHICH WERE FOUND WERE ACTUALLY INSIGNIFICANT ITEMS IN TERMS OF THE TOTAL SCHOOL BUDGET. (HW)

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Expectations for the School Board Role as Related to Level of Local Financial Support and Allocation of Expenditures

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This study examined relationships in selected school systems between (1) the level of expectations for the financial aspects of the school board role and the level of local financial support for the schools, and (2) the level of expectations for selected expenditures and the allocation of expenditures by the school board. The rationale for this investigation stemmed from role theory concerning conflict in expectations, and from research concerning the interstitial position of the school board in society. The relationships between expectations of society (both intra- and extra-organization groups) and the school board's procurement and disposal functions provided the basis for the following hypotheses:

> Hypothesis 1. There is no significant relationship between the level of expectations for the financial aspects of the school board role and the level of local financial support.
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> Hypothesis 2. There is no significant relationship between the level of expectations for selected expenditures and the amount of funds allocated for these expenditures.

In addition to the major hypotheses, certain ancillary questions were investigated. These included the relationship between generalized expectations for the school board role and financial support; the relationship between level of satisfaction with certain phases of the school program and financial support; and an examination of superintendents' expectations and degree of satisfaction in relation to the level of financial support in their respective school districts.

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Twelve Wisconsin school districts were selected for participation on the basis of (a) minimum size of 1400 pupils in average daily membership (K-12), (b) the relative wealth of the district, (c) the fiscal structure of the district, (d) the ratio of non-public to public school enrollment, and (e) judgments of the extent of controversy within the district.

Expectations for the school board role as held by citizens, teachers, community officials, school board members, and school superintendents were measured by use of an interview instrument. The instrument was administered to samples of approximately 150 citizens and twenty teachers, and to all municipal officials, school board members, and school superintendents in each of the twelve districts.

Expectations for level of expenditure and for specific expenditures held by each of the groups of respondents were analyzed, respectively, in relation to four measures of financial support and to ten budget items. Statistical techniques used to test the relationships between the variables included Spearman rank correlation coefficients and Pearson product-moment coefficients, including the proper tests for significance. Because the first hypothesis was subjected to sixteen separate tests, and the second hypothesis to forty, a table of critical values for rejecting null proportion hypotheses was employed to determine how many of the separate tests would have to be significant to allow rejection of the major hypotheses.

Only one of the sixteen tests of the first hypothesis proved significant. A negative relationship was found to exist between teachers' expectations for level of expenditures and the operating levy required per pupil in average daily membership in their respective districts. On the basis of one out of sixteen significant relationships, it was impossible to reject the null hypothesis, and consequently no relationship was shown between the level of expectations for the financial aspects of the school board role and the level of local financial support for the public schools.

Thirty-six separate tests of the second hypothesis resulted in nine significant relationships. Teachers were found to hold expectations for "budgeting money for keeping up with changes in the way subjects are taught" which correlated negatively with district expenditures on inservice programs. District expenditures on insurance premiums accounted for five of the significant relationships: two concerning teacher health insurance and three relative to student accident insurance. Teachers and municipal officials held expectations for district expenditures for teacher health insurance which correlated positively with the amounts spent. Citizens, teachers, and school board members held expectations for district expenditures on student accident insurance which correlated positively with the amounts spent. The fourth area of school operation which produced significant relationships concerned the extent to which rental fees should be charged by school districts for such items as textbooks, workbooks and lockers. Three groups -- citizens, school board members, and municipal officials -- held expectations for the extent to which school districts should charge for use of books and facilities which correlated positively with the amounts collected by districts.

The proportion of significant relationships (9) to the total number of tests (36) was not large enough, however, to reject the second hypothesis. Consequently, no relationship was shown between the level of expectations for selected expenditures and the amount of funds allocated for those expenditures.

Three ancillary questions were investigated during the course of this study. The first question was concerned about whether or not general expectations for the school board role (with an underlying variable of "modern to traditional" expectations) were related to district financial support. None of the tests were significant, and therefore no relationship between the variables was found to exist.

The second ancillary question examined the relationship between satisfaction with certain phases of the school program and district financial support. Three

of the sixteen tests resulted in correlations which were significant at the .05 level. The first of the variables which were correlated significantly were citizens' satisfaction with school programs and the operating levy required per pupil in average daily membership. The correlation was negative, which indicated that the most satisfied citizens were those in districts which had the lowest pupil operating levy, and likewise, the least satisfied citizens were those in districts with the highest operating levy per pupil.

The other two significant relationships involved teachers' satisfaction with certain school programs and (a) the local tax levy for school purposes, and (b) the ratio of local tax levy for school purposes to total tax levies for all purposes. Both correlations were positive, indicating that teachers appeared to be more satisfied in districts where school tax levies were higher than in comparable districts, and in which a higher proportion of the local tax dollar went to schools as compared to municipal governments.

The proportion of significant findings (3) to the total number of tests (16) was not sufficiently large to state an existent relationship between the satisfaction and financial support variables.

The third ancillary question examined the relationships between financial support in the districts and the superintendents' expectations for expenditures, their modern-traditional expectations, and their satisfaction with the school programs. In no case were any significant relationships established.

Several conclusions and implications were drawn from this study. Among the more relevant conclusions were:

1. Holding preferences for particular school programs and being willing to pay for them may not be the same.
2. There may be a difference between responding favorably toward financial support for schools in an interview, and an actual financial commitment for them.
3. Expectations for expenditures may not exist as a single identifiable concept. There appears to be no

"all-out" support for schools, but citizens seem to discriminate between what they will support.

4. The significant relationships which were found were actually insignificant items in terms of the total school budget. The lack of a consistent relationship between the major variables suggests two possibilities: (a) there is a lack of perception by board members of outside expectations for the school board role, or (b) financial decisions are not effectively within the control of the local school board, and are therefore not really controlled by expectations held by local citizens.